Z.10.12'

A SERMON

Preached at the

Oxford-shire Feast.

AT

St. *MARY LE BOW*;

November 29. 1683.

473:9

By *John Hartcliffe* M. A. and Fellow of *King's* College in *Cambridge.*

Published at the Request of the Stewards.

LONDON,

Printed by *Ralph Holt*, for *Samuel Carr* at the *King's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1684.

J.P.
Sc.

The First Chapter of JONAH, the latter part of the Eighth and Ninth Verses.

What is thine Occupation, and whence comest Thou? What is thy Country, and of what People art Thou?

And He said unto them, I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of Heaven, who made the Sea, and the dry Land.

Niveh, that great City and Metropolis of *Assyria*, had now filled up the Measure of its Iniquities; which called aloud for Vengeance from Heaven: Insomuch that the Prophet *Jonah* was going to give the Inhabitants notice of their unavoidable Destruction, unless they Repented. He Embarks himself in a Ship bound for *Tarshish*; and no sooner was He got out to Sea, but a terrible Storm arises, such a one, as made the very Sailors tremble; altho they are a hardy sort of Men, very familiar and acquainted with Dangers: After they had for a long time tug'd the leaky Vessel

to no purpoſe, in a great Fright they call every Man upon his God, *Belus* perhaps, or *Aſtarte*, *Melcartus* and *Ilus*. But *Jonah* was all this while miſſing, who was fallen aſleep in ſome hidden Corner of the Ship: After they had found him out, they enquire preſently what Country-Man He was; becauſe He was not calling upon his God, as well as others, in this Diſtreſs of Weather.

To which, He replys, that He was an *Hebrew*, *and that He feared the Lord, the God of Heaven, who hath made the Sea, and the dry Land*: the Worſhip of Him was his daily Occupation; and he expected no Relief from any ſuch Gods, as were the Creatures of Fear, or a deluded Imagination; But his God was the Creator and Preſerver of all Things; and if ever they eſcaped the Tempeſt, it muſt be by Confiding in Him; if ever they arrived ſafe Aſhore, it muſt be thro his Power and Providence, whom alone the Winds and the Seas Obey. We may ſuppoſe, the Prophet told them, how vain a Thing it was, to fly to Stocks and Stones in this Caſe; when their Safety was only in the *living* God; when their deliverance could be wrought only by his Power and Mercy. You may indeed cry out, mangle and cut your ſelves, as *Baal*'s Prieſts did: But no one hears, or can anſwer your Requeſts; becauſe you Addreſs your

your ſelves to Idols, which in Reallity are *Nothing* at all. Whereas I am an Hebrew, an Abhorrer of all manner of Idolatry; I am of that Country in which the true God is Adored in Sincerity and Truth, who is both able and willing to ſave all, that truſt in Him; who is more than ordinary concern'd for the Miſerable and Afflicted: Bleſſed be his Holy Name, that I was born among thoſe People, who are Untainted by any Idolatrous or Superſtitious Worſhip; who never bowed the Knee to the Altar of any ſtrange God. Hence it is, that I can ſleep in Storms; reſt ſecure in the midſt of imminent Dangers; whereas you, poor ignorant Wretches, are at your Wits end, as ſoon as the Sea begins to ſwell, becauſe you know not the Ways of that God, who is Almighty, and whoſe Arm is ſtretched out to ſave his faithful Servants. In confidence of his Aid and Aſſiſtance, I am now travelling to an unknown Place, and carrying a very ungrateful Meſſage to the chief Seat of a Vicious and proud Nation: But I fear no Harm, ſo long as I am of that Race of Men, who Worſhip the true God by rational Services; ſo long as I am an Hebrew, and fear the Lord, the God of Heaven, *&c.*

From which Words, I ſhall firſt conſider, what Advantage and Benefit it is, to be Born and Educated in ſome Countrys above others.

Secondly, I ſhall ſhew, that the greateſt Happineſs and Comfort, Men are capable of receiving, doth ariſe from their being numbred among thoſe People, who truly fear God, the Lord of Heaven, who made the Sea and the dry Land.

Firſt, The Advantage of being Born and Educated in ſome Countrys above others, will appear; if we conſider them both in a Natural, and in a Spiritual Senſe: For ſome Countrys are ſo ſituated on the Globe of the Earth, that either the Inhabitants are continually ſcorched with furious Heats, or they are benummed and ſtupified by inceſſant Colds; ſome wander in untrodden Paths, thro vaſt barren Deſarts, ſuch as thoſe of *Arabia*: Others ſit ſhivering at the Foot of the Riphæan Hills; undergo the ſevere Hardſhips of the Northern Pole. In one place, they can ſcarce find Water to quench their Thirſt: In another, they fill their Bellies with Roots, or the ſmall Herbage of the Earth: In one part of the World, the poor naked Indian lays his Neck on the Block, to be made a miſerable Sacrifice to ſome Deity of Wood or Stone; and an infinite number have their Ears born to the Arbitrary and bloody Decrees of an Eaſtern Emperor. Theſe Circumſtances of Life are ſad and deplorable, ſuch as render the Condition of Mankind an Object of much Pity and Compaſſion;

ſion; but there it is moſt lamentable, where their Bodies draw the Yoak of Slavery; and their Minds are deſtitute of common Civility, as well as of all true Conceptions concerning God or Religion.

This Conſideration, muſt make us ſee our Happineſs, who are Natives of ſuch a Country, as ſeems to be the Garden and Paradice of the whole World; a Country, on which the Clouds drop Fatneſs Night and Day: Where an abundance of all things doth encreaſe, that may ſupport and refreſh the Life of Man: So that it ſeems to be ſhut in and encloſed from the reſt of the Earth, as if it were deſigned by God himſelf, to be the principal Seat of Plenty and worldly Happineſs.

Secondly, The Advantage of being Born and Educated in ſome Countrys above others, will appear greater; if we conſider them in a ſpiritual Senſe: And this is that Country, in which the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt was planted very early: That Goſpel, which is the Dew from Heaven, whereby we grow up in Grace, to the full ſtature of Holy and good Chriſtians; whereby we are directed to live up to our higheſt Faculties, as it becomes rational Beings, that are endowed with intellectual Nature: By which we are forbid to do any thing, that would make us like Beaſts, or that would transform us into the likeneſs

neſs of Devils: by which Rhiteouſneſs and Humanity, the true Worſhip and Fear of God is wrought in our Souls: War and Bloodſhed, Rapine and Spoil are rooted out; which are the ways of Living, and the Trade of other Nations: A Goſpel, which hath ſilenced the Heathen Oracles, and hath taught us to entertain right Notions concerning God; hath delivered us from dark and uncertain Conjectures at things, by bringing Life and Immortality to light; by pointing out to us the right way, and by teaching us, how we ſhould follow the Conduct of true and ſincere Reaſon: In brief, This is that Syſtem of Religion, which is the moſt conducive Inſtrument in the whole World, to the Pleaſure both of Body and Mind: And this is that excellent Work of God, which makes Men Good, whom it finds bad; as it quickly turn'd the firſt Inhabitants of this Iſland, who were Unciviliz'd and Barbarous, into Humble, Affable, Meek, Charitable, Modeſt, Prudent, Tender, and Compaſſionate Creatures: This being now the true Character of an Engliſhman, that He naturally Reverences the God of Heaven and Earth; and abhors all manner of Atheiſm and Prophaneneſs.

Theſe Advantages of our Country conſidered both in a Natural and Spiritual Senſe, being well weighed and compared with the Condition of other

other Countrys and People: We may conclude; that we have as large a Field, as any is, of external Felicity; whilſt our Laws, and our Religion make us to be the beſt conſtituted State under the Sun; being free from thoſe unſufferable Burdens, which ſo great a part of the World do labour under: a ſerious Reflection on whoſe Miſeries doth ſufficiently ſet off and illuſtrate our happy Enjoyments. For had we been of a Pagan People, we had been in a worſe Condition, than the Beaſts, that Periſh; for then we ſhould have made Beaſts, our Gods; we ſhould have ſhed Tears at the ſmell of a *Deified Onyon*; we ſhould have hewn down a Tree, and have furniſhed our *Chimneys* with one part, with the other our *Chappels*. Had we been bred up among thoſe, who are miſled by the Impoſtour *Mahomet*; we had for ever been condemned to follow Fables and Lyes. But (thanks be to God) we are of that People and Nation, where the God of Heaven and Earth is worſhiped in Spirit and in Truth: Where we enjoy the free exerciſe of that Religion, which hath the pureſt Reaſon to recommend it to our Judgments, which creates a ſweet and heavenly temper of Mind in all its Profeſſors: For it's impreſſions breath not upon the Paſſions, but the Reaſons of Men, and all its Aſſiſtances work in a calm and rational Way, ſo that every good

Man's Religion *floats* not in his Blood, nor riſes or falls with the *Ebbs* and *Tides* of his Humours: But he maintains an evenneſs of Mind in all the various Conſtitutions of his Body: He confines his Piety entirely within his Soul, and cheerfully keeps it from all Mixtures of *Imagination*, as knowing, a Religious Fancy to be the greateſt Cheat in the World, and the greateſt Virtue to conſiſt in promoting an univerſal Benevolence and Kindneſs to Mankind: whereby in the room of Envying, Wrath, Striſe, and every miſcheivous Paſſion; are planted in the Souls of Men Love, Candour, Ingenuity, Clemency, Patience, Mildneſs, Gentleneſs, and all other Inſtances of good Nature. So that we aſſume the honourable Name of Chriſtians; not that we merely owe this Title to the *Font*, where we were Baptized; to our Education or *Climate*, wherein we were born; or that we proceed according to Cuſtom and general Conſent in the Religion of our Native Country: But upon a ſtrict Examination we find our ſelves, by the Principles of Grace, and by the Law of our own Reaſon, obliged to Embrace no other, but the Chriſtian Faith; there being nothing ſo intrinſecally Rational, nothing ſo ſelf-evident, as *this* is. For it is pregnant with Wiſdom and Happineſs; it is admirably Conſonant to the Deſires and Needs of Human Nature; it is agreeable

greeable to the Faculties of Men; it is infinitely ſerviceable to the Content and Tranquility of the Mind; it is ſuch a thing, as every wiſe Man would chooſe, as moſt becoming the Dignity of rational Nature, and moſt conducive to his Happineſs: It rids the Mind of irkeſom and vexatious Thoughts; it exempts men from the Troubles and Tumults of diſquieting Paſſions; it frees the Conſcience of all ſad and gloomy Reflections: It is the greateſt art of Joy and Pleaſure; it makes us like to God, as well in the Happineſs, as in the Purity of our Lives: In ſhort, it hath in it all the excellent and amiable Qualities, which can prevail upon the Reaſons or Affections of Men.

Which brings me to the *ſecond Thing propounded*, which was, to ſhew, that the greateſt Happineſs Men can receive, doth ariſe from their being numbred among thoſe People, *who fear God, the Lord of Heaven, who made the Sea and the dry Land.* This Happineſs is beſt demonſtrated by Compariſon with the Enjoyments of other People, and Nations. Indeed when a Man paſſeth into the *Turkiſh* Dominions, it is no unpleaſant Sight to behold a new Scene of the World, and an unknown Face of Things, in Habits, Dyet, Manners, Cuſtom, and Language. Yet all this while, the *People* ſuffer the moſt intolerable Bondage, both in Body and

Mind; their Necks are galled with Oppreſſ[illegible], and their Underſtandings are filled with the *Belief* of the moſt extravagant and abſurd Opinions. And when a Man travels into *Italy*, it is a glorious Shew for him, to ſee the Gallantries of a pompous Religion; their ſolemn Proceſſions after *Reliques*, a Thorn perhaps, or a Chip of Wood: Where the Soil, having plentifully received the *good Seed* of Chriſt's Goſpel, ſeems to produce nothing, but *Shrines*, *Altars*, *Images*, *rare Pictures*, *and rich Chappels*: Nay He views this *Pageantry* of Religion ſet off by the fineſt *Witts*, delineated by the choiceſt *Penſils*, *garniſht* by the rareſt Carvers. Theſe little Devices they have to catch the Multitude; to raiſe a *Miſt* before their Eys, that they may not ſee the Snares, that are laid for them; to guild the Pill, that they may ſwallow it the more glibly: For by theſe *Wheedles* their minds are betrayed and ſeduced into the moſt extravagant and nonſenſical Doctrines: By theſe Stratagems they are diſſeized of the *Book of God*, by which they hold their Salvation: By theſe Arts, inſtead of ſober Godlineſs, they are taught to practiſe an infinite number of ſilly and *antick* Ceremonies: By theſe Tricks they are made Slaves, and Tenants both for Soul and Eſtate to their pretended Guides and Governours of Conſcience. Had we been ſo unhappy, as to have been born and educated,

cited, under the ſame Prejudices, and ſuperſtitious Blindneſs: true *Piety* would long ſince have left us, and common *Honeſty* too. For who would conform to the ſtrict Rules of a pious Life here, if he were perſwaded, as the *Romaniſts* are, that the Indulgence of a *Pope* can deliver him out of the Pains of the other World? Who would not enfranchiſe himſelf from all Duty, both to God and man, if he did believe, that the Diſpenſation of the ſame Pope can diſſolve the Oaths of Subjects to obey their Prince, or can ſet at liberty every *good Catholick*, from keeping Faith, or dealing honeſtly with *Hæreticks*? But it is our Happineſs, that we live in a Country, that is not ſubject to blind Obedience, or an implicit Faith; that we are Members of ſuch a Church, as is uniform in all its Devotions: whoſe avowed Principles and Practices diſown all Reſiſtance of lawful Authority, our Saviour never warranting the ſhedding of any Blood, not of his own moſt implacable Enemys. Let men look but into its doctrine and Hiſtory; and they will find neither the *Knoxes*, nor the *Junius Brutus's* on the one ſide; nor the *Bellarmin's*, *Eſcobar's*, or *Mariana's* on the other: This is the Church, that makes the Proteſtant Religion conſiderable in *Chriſtendom*; becauſe it doth not confound us with the many *Poſtures* and *Garbs* of Worſhip, or with the continual ſtarting up of new Lights; becauſe it doth not

approve of *Enthuſiaſtical* Heats, of ſudden *Impulſes* of Spirit, of *Zeal* without Underſtanding, nor of any ſuch extraordinary *Calls*; whereby ſome men have thought themſelves authorized to overthrow Kingdoms, becauſe there is ſomewhat to be found in the *Revelation* concerning *a Beaſt*, a little *Horn*, and a fifth *Vial*. But in the room of wild and unaccountable Conceits, our Church ſettles in us clear and certain Notions of Religious Duties; forbids us to make falſe Interpretations of Scripture, to countenance any evil Deſign; charges us to place our Religion in the Practice of true and real Goodneſs; not in *Forms*, and *Schemes* of Speech, or unintelligible Words, that have no meaning or Senſe belonging to them, but in the *Heart*, and in good Affections iſſuing thence. By theſe means we are brought to the Exerciſe of ſubſtantial Virtue, having no hope of Salvation, unleſs we work it out with Fear and Trembling. For no man is in any thing more certain, than that he ought to be ſober and temperate in reference to himſelf; that he ought to deal righteouſly, and ſo, as he would be dealt by; that he ought to carry himſelf equally and fairly; and that he ought to fear and *reverence* the Deity: Now the *Church*, where we were Baptized, plainly tells us, what we are to do; what ſober, righteous, and godly Lives we are bound to lead, and ſets before

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our Eyes the danger of neglecting theſe Duties: So that we are not deceived by any ways of *Fraud* or *Falſhood*; we have no ſuch *Cheats* put upon us, as the Doctrine of Merit, or the delivering Souls out of Purgatory by Maſſes. But we are dealt *Honeſtly* withal; for without Flattery our Church declares, no man ſhall be ſaved without perſonal Holineſs, and unleſs he be *renewed in the Spirit of his Mind*: that no Sacrifice ſhall attone for his Sin, altho he make his whole Body a *Burnt-Offering*: He ſhall not hide his Iniquities by the greateſt Fire and Smoak he can raiſe, unleſs he deny his moſt beloved Appetites, and caſt off his choiceſt Luſts: He may go a great way from home in *Pilgrimages*, and wander thro Deſarts in Sackcloath and Hair; being clogg'd with heavy, malancholy Blood, he may retire to a dark, religious Room, and lock himſelf in with many *Keys*: But all will not do; unleſs he part with the ſins of his Heart, come abroad, and practiſe the *active Virtues* of Chriſt's Religion: Unleſs he faſhion his Life according to the Laws of it, and takes not up his Religion for Mode-ſake, or becauſe he was born, where it is profeſſed. Thus, I ſay, our Church deals *uprightly* with Mankind, by telling them, that here they ought to fit and quaſie themſelves for the ſtate of Glory and Bleſſedneſs; that here they ſhould get themſelves diſcharged

charged of evil Habits, which the repetition of *Ave-Mary* Prayers, or the Abſolution of a Prieſt at the laſt, cannot wipe away; eſpecially when they have long abuſed themſelves by ill Practiſes and Cuſtoms. Wherefore being Members of this Church, which ſhews us the beſt way of Worſhiping God by a *reaſonable Service*: which teaches the ſureſt Principles of Peace and Charity, that tend to reconcile the Differences of Men; which preſcribes the beſt Methods of propagating Love and Good-will in the World: Being Subjects to that Government, by whoſe Laws this Church is eſtabliſhed; where the Supreme Ruler enjoys a Capacity of doing all the Good imaginable to Mankind, and is in his Nature inclined ſo to do. I muſt ſay, we are a happy People both in the Conſtitution of our Church and State.

That this Happines may abide for ever with us: we are obliged,

Fiſt, To keep up a friendly Society, and Correſpondence with all Men.

Secondly, We are more particularly engaged to love and help one another, as we are *Country-men*, born in the ſame *Neighbourhood*.

Firſt, We are obliged to keep up a friendly Society and Correſpondence with all Men; becauſe without this Society and Correſpondence, no Man can poſſibly live happily or well:

well: and we know, every man hath a natural deſire of his own Happineſs; the ſenſe whereof reſults from the firſt and ſtrongeſt Inſtincts of Nature: In that it is without doubt natural to Men, as to other Creatures, to ſeek after their own Welfare: Conſequently to conſider, by what means it is attainable: Which particular Welfare of every Man, is not to be had without mutual Benevolence, and a common regard for the proſperity of the wole Body of Men: This preſerves them Honeſt and Virtuous in all the entercourſes of Life: For ſhould human Society disband, and betake themſelves to Woods; Men would be quickly turned into wild Creatures, and muſt ſubſiſt by preying upon each other: Then the moſt Innocent would be leaſt ſecure, becauſe they are not apt to Invade other men's Rights, and are ever expoſed to Wrongs and Injuries.

This therefore is the proper and uſeful end of Society, to inſtitute a common Friendſhip among Men, that they may be endeared to each other by mutual Offices of Kindneſs and Love: The *Angels* teach us this Leſſon; that we ſhould condeſcend to the meaneſt Office for the good of our Brethren. The work of theſe miniſtring Spirits is, to promote the Welfare of Mankind: ſo that to employ our ſelves to do good unto Men, and to further them in the way of Salva-

tion, is to be as good as Angels unto Men: We hope to be one day like them in Happineſs, let us now make them the Examples of our Duty and Obedience: And indeed, were Men as faithful to one another, as the Condition of their Nature requires, and the Author of it expects, there would be no need of Civil Laws and Penalties: We ſhould be all then like our Country-men of *Brightwell*, where it is obſerved, there hath been no Ale-Houſe, no Sectary, nor any Suit of Law within the Memory of Man. VVould every ſingle Perſon take right Meaſures of himſelf; reflect ſeriouſly upon his frail and helpleſs State in this VVorld; conſider, how inſufficient all his perſonal Strength is to ſecure him; he muſt believe, that if there were not a common Aſſiſtance; if he had not Friends and Acquaintance to fly to upon all Occaſions; nothing could be more wretched and forlorn, than the life of Man. For as the *Malmesbury* Philoſopher ſays, could we ſuppoſe a Man out of Society; he muſt live in perpetual *Fears and Jealouſies*: For his Condition muſt be deſperate, who Correſponds with no body, but truſts to his own Wit and Underſtanding, to defend himſelf againſt the Fraud and Violence of the whole VVorld beſides; ſo that Men muſt thwart both their Reaſon and their Intereſt, before they can reconcile their Minds to any other Thoughts, then

then of Love and Society; Human Nature being ſo much inclined to both; For ſuppoſing the brutiſh part of Man to be wild and Savage; yet if we conſider him as an intelligent and rational Being; nothing will appear more extravagant, than to affirm, that he will not purſue ſuch Means, as tend to the Comfort and Chearfulneſs of his Life. For a ſociable Life, and a friendly Converſation with one another, is of great Uſe to us, in reſpect of our ſeveral Employments; which we are thereby enabled to follow and accompliſh with greater Safety, much more Chearfulneſs, and better Succeſs: With greater Safety; becauſe as the wiſe Man ſays of two Travelling together, if one falls, the other will lift him up; but woe to him, that is alone, when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him: With much more Cheerfulneſs, becauſe good Company doth ever leſſen and abate the Tediouſneſs of Labours; doth eaſily ſubdue Troubles and Oppoſitions: Inſomuch that it was a Cuſtom in antient Times, for Men to meet together, that they might find out a way, how to Comfort any of their Friends, that was fallen into Adverſity: This was the reaſon of the Viſit, which *Job*'s Friends made him: With better Succeſs; becauſe Affairs are always managed with better Wiſdom, and conſequently Succeſs, where ſeveral Heads and

Hands are joyned to carry them on. What a ſtrange Chimera then, what an unaccountable Fiction was that Stoick's Wiſe and Happy Man! Who fancied, no Man could be either one or the other, unleſs he were ſhut up in ſome Dungeon, or loſt in ſome deſolate Iſland; where he might be able *acquieſcere ſibi, cogitationibus ſuis traditus*: But we know, that *Adam*, our common Father could not be happy without a Companion; and if we conſider all the Sons of *Adam*, as truly they are, and we ſhall ſee, they are all very lyable to Confuſion and Error. Whilſt we are alone, many tumultuous Thoughts and vain Projects ſtart up in our Minds: The Weakneſs and Defects whereof are plainly ſeen, as ſoon as we communicate them to others: Of our ſelves we are very apt to run into Miſtakes in every thing, we ſet about; there is no better remedy againſt them, than the Advice of a faithful Acquaintance: moſt of our Diſturbances proceed from irregular Paſſions: We have the Feavours and Frenzyes of Anger and Love to ſtruggle with, that keep our Minds out of Frame and Order: Hope and Fear ſhake us, like an Ague: Envy brings a Conſumption upon all our Faculties: all of them lye croſs to our Souls, and like ſmall Particles, that have rugged and ſharp Angles, do continually moleſt and grate upon us. Whatever then that is, which will preſerve

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us from theſe fretting Paſſions, that rob us of our Peace, vex and corrode our Spirits, muſt be of great Conſequence to our Welfare. The Society of good and virtuous Men is one of the beſt Remedies in this caſe: is one of the moſt likely ways to free us from the Tumults of diſorderly Affections, ſo that we may find Eaſe and Pleaſure, Sweetneſs and Contentment in our Lives: Becauſe into their Boſoms we may pour forth our ſecret Troubles, and they will help us to bear our Burden, To them we may divide our Griefs, and ſo diminiſh them; we may communicate our Joys and ſo encreaſe them. Nothing, but ſincere and unfeigned Love, can make us thus friendly and helpful to one another; which Love is ſtiled in Scripture, *the Bond of Perfection*, and muſt not be founded upon private Ends: For this is Traffick and not Friendſhip. But we muſt uſe a diſcreet Freedom in giving Counſel to our Brethren, or Admonition, as there is need: We muſt be conſtant, and never forſake them in Adverſity: becauſe a Man, who deſerts his Friend at ſuch a time, is ever to be condemn'd for Baſeneſs and Meanneſs of Spirit. Wherefore that we may be effectually moved to the Exerciſe of this entire Friendſhip and Love for Mankind; let us not only conſider, that it will pour down upon us great and unexpected Showers of Delight and Satisfaction:

But let us look abroad into the World, and take a view of the State of many People, how uncomfortably they live by their neglect of theſe Virtues: by reaſon of Diſſentions among them, Deſtruction is brought upon their Families: By Quarrels and Diviſions thoſe are ſeparated and conſequently weakned, whom God hath joyned in the Profeſſion of the ſame Holy and peaceable Religion.

For the Prevention of this growing Miſchief; We are Secondly, more particularly obliged to be kind to, and love one another, as we are Country-Men, born in the ſame Neighbourhood.

And when I mention my native Country; methinks it is a kind of reſolving me into my own Beginnings: For like all ſorts of Fruit, there is a natural tendency in us to the Ground, from whence we came, and where our Root is fixed: Conſequently there muſt be a more than ordinary Inclination to love and help thoſe, who are of the ſame Birth and Growth with our ſelves: They are as it were connatural to us, and we are more concerned for their Proſperity, than for Strangers: For it is in human, as in natural Plantations, partaking of the ſame Soil; they cheriſh one another, and thrive beſt together. There are ('tis true) in the courſe of human Life, from our Cradles upward, certain Periods

ods or degrees of Change; commonly (as the Antients have noted) every ſeven Years: Inſomuch that our Perſons may be ſo altered, that we may be as much unknown to one another, as we are to Forreigners. However this Strangeneſs is ſoon laid aſide, and we are as it were by a forcible Impulſe of Nature, ready to Embrace our Country-Men with an undiſſembled Affection: Without which (as my Lord *Bacon* ſays) our meeting together doth not make Company, but a Crowd; Faces are but a Gallery of Pictures, and Talk but a tinkling Cymbal, without true hearted Love and Friendſhip. Who knows not, that there is a mutual Bond of Amity and Brotherhood between Man and Man over all the World? neither is it the Engliſh Sea, that can ſever us from that Duty and Relation: a ſtraiter Bond yet there is between Neighbours and Friends: For a Friend and Countryman is my ſecond or better-ſelf; my Tutelar Angel, by whom I may be defended from innumerable Dangers: For as God ſends his Angels, Creatures, that excel in Underſtanding and Power, that are moſt vigilant and vigorous in their Actions, not only to give Succeſs to our temporal Affairs, but to aſſiſt us in the great Concernments of our Souls; ſo alſo he hath planted in the Minds of Men ſuch mutual Inclinations to advance one anothers Happineſs and Benefit: That we may ſay, He

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hath made the whole Creation ſerviceable to Mankind: Whilſt the glorious Spirits above, and our own Fellow-Creatures, do contribute, as much as they can, to the good of our Bodies, and the delight of our Minds. Men may highly eſteem the Titles of Honour, and they may be proud of their large Poſſeſſions: But it is not poſſible, there ſhould be any thing beſtowed upon a Man, of equal Value, with a faithful Friend and Neighbour: There are few Hearts, that are not double; few Tongues, that are not Cloven, and a Man muſt have Recourſe to the age of Poetry, the golden Times, to find ſuch a happy Pair, as entirely love one another. Let this Rarity be found in our Converſation: Let us ſhew that Friendſhip to each other, as may be valuable for its ſtability and laſting Nature; ſuch, as may not be ſubject to the change of Fortune, the Ruſt of Time, nor the Violence of Men: let others glory in their high and ſlippery Places; we envy not their Happineſs, ſo long as we preſerve the love of our Country-men: let others aſcribe, what they ſuffer or enjoy here below, to ſome good or malignant Influences from above: as for us, we do not think, there is any Planet ſo lucky, as a truſty Companion, and on the contrary, none ſo malicious, as falſe hearted and perfidious Acquaintance: let others be ſolicitous, how *Jupiter* or *Mercury* look upon them in their Affaires;

Affairs; it imports us moſt to mark, what Men we Converſe withal: And altho we are to prefer our Country-Men above others; yet theſe are to be avoided, if they are Vicious; if they would draw us into any familiarity or acquaintance with Sin: For above all things, we muſt be careful, that the Virgin-purity of our Minds may not be Deflowred, nor its native Modeſty laid waſt by any manner of Vice. Therefore for thoſe of our Country we are to have a particular Affection, who exerciſe a due Care and Government over their Lives and Actions; who excel in the peculiar Virtues of Converſation, Modeſty, Humility, Meekneſs, Cheerfulneſs, univerſal Kindneſs and Charity. They, who are Cloathed with theſe good Qualities, have in a moſt eminent Degree that Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which, St. *Peter* ſays, is in the Sight of God of ſo great Price: There is no appearance of Pride or Paſſion in any of their Words or Actions; they are free from Anger and bitterneſs of Spirit; their Company is Affable and Pleaſant; which ariſes from a Chriſtian ſerenity of Mind, and a great evenneſs of Temper. Theſe Virtues of all others, ought to ſhine brighteſt in us: then we ſhall be always Cheerful, and always Kind; upon all Occaſions and Accidents perpetually the ſame; by receiving theſe virtuous Qualities into our Tem-

per, we ſhall be rendered truly Wiſe, Holy, and Good: We ſhall give real Demonſtrations of the Truth and Integrity of our Religion, by our Actions; we ſhall ever employ our Faculties, and determine them to that, which is good and fit to be done; and this will convince Men, that we live under the Guidance and Influence of the good Spirit of God: From which good Spirit do proceed all good Notions and Inclinations in Mankind, all their good Qualities and Deſires, all their mutual Love and good-Will: When Chriſt Jeſus by his Spirit hath thus turned us into the ſame Diſpoſition with himſelf, hath moulded and faſhioned us to the Temper of himſelf, our Head; then we ſhall be always deviſing the moſt effectual ways of doing Good in the World; managing and diſpoſing our charitable Deeds, to the beſt Purpoſes, and to the largeſt Extent: Our whole Heart will be employed in theſe things, ſo that we ſhall be little affected with any other matter, and ſeldom mind the ſtrange Occurrences of a troubleſom and buſie Age. Let us therefore think our ſelves happy in nothing here upon Earth, but in the Opportunities we enjoy of correſponding with one another in the Duties and Offices of Religion and Friendſhip, which is nothing elſe, but a Commutation of Hearts; whereby the greateſt dearneſs is created towards each other: eſpecially where there is

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an agreeableneſs of Humour, and a reſemblance of Diſpoſition: The Impreſſion, that theſe make, can never be blotted out: For we do ever carry in our Minds the amiable Perfections of Virtuous and Worthy Perſons: We always think of thoſe, who have touched our Inclinations with their agreeable Nature: which is moſt probably to be found among the Natives of the ſame Place and Climate: and where this agreeable Nature is, the Friendſhip reſulting thence muſt be very conſiſtent and well ſetled; ſuch as nothing can diſorder, and Death its ſelf cannot End: For it will at laſt tranſlate us to thoſe happy Regions, where Peace and Charity, Benevolence and Good-Will are in their Kingdom, and reign over every Heart.

From the Premiſſes this Inference may be made; That we are bound with all Thankfulneſs to acknowledg the Goodneſs of God; that we were born of Chriſtian Parents; that we have been Educated in the true Religion, whereby we have enjoyed the advantages of God's Grace and his holy Spirit; that we have any Bowels of Compaſſion for the Poor and Needy, ſo as to conſult their Relief in this publick manner; eſpecially in placing out indigent Youth to Trades, becauſe the whole Content and Felicity of a Man depends upon the choice of an honeſt Calling and State of Life; that Brother-

ly Love doth continue among us, ſo that we can Converſe together without Offence, that we are not of ſurly, and uncompliant Humours; that we are not of ſavage, fierce or inſolent Diſpoſitions: which would make us fitter Company for Beaſts, than Men, and for Wilderneſſes rather than Cities.

To all therefore, that ſhall ask us the like Queſtion, as the Prophet *Jonah* was asked, *whence we came, and of what Country we are*: May we anſwer them, as he did; that we are Chriſtians, *who fear the Lord of Heaven and Earth, that made the Sea and the dry Land*: that we were born in a Soil no leſs Fruitful in the Race of good Men, loving Neighbours, and obedient Subjects; than it is remarkable for yielding an abundance of all things, that may render our Beings in the World, either happy or eaſie to us. That, as the Country, from whence we came, is much taken notice of and Commended for its quick Streams, free from Stagnation and ſtinking Vapours, that may aſcend to darken and corrupt the Skye; ſo we may be as exemplary for good Humour, affable Temper, and humble Converſation, clear of all Sullenneſs, Malancholly, and Diſcontent, that may raiſe Clouds, and conſequently Storms in the Nation: They ſay likewiſe, the Air, in which we drew our firſt Breath, is beyond all others the moſt Serene

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and Pure; may the pureneſs of this Air incline us to more refined Paſſions than other Men; may it animate the Spirits of the Heart, as well as enliven thoſe of the Brain to a more vigorous Purſuit of noble and generous Actions. The wiſe and judicious King *Alfred* did ſelect *Oxford* for the Muſes Seat: where continually a Race of Men are bred up as liberal and ingenuous, as the Arts and Sciences, which they profeſs; where a large and bountiful Proviſion is made for the advancement of Learning, the nobleſt and beſt Work, that can be in any civil Nation; where are encouraged and maintained the Champions of our Religion; a Religion, that dares come, not only where Men can Believe, but where they can Diſcern and Judge. The Kings of *England* ever ſince have made *Oxford*, as it were their City of Refuge, when they have been forced to fly either from War or Plague; as if this place were only Inviolable by the Arrow, that flyeth either by Night or Day: No one therefore can upon juſt grounds challenge this for his Country, who entertains any unnatural Conſpiracies (ſo much as in his Thoughts) againſt the Order and Peace of the World, or againſt the Safety and Honour of thoſe, whom God hath appointed Governours over it. May we then ſtill live, as our Fore-Fathers have done, without the Suſpition of having any diſloyal

Principles to the Church or State; may we ever have the Reputation of ſuch Citizens, as are aſſociated by the common Tyes of Humanity, and the Bonds of Peace? May the power of that excellent Religion, we profeſs, be lodged in our Hearts; ſo the appearance of it will be very exemplary and uſeful in our Converſations: then we ſhall avoid all that Violence and Sharpneſs, which accompanies the Differences in Opinion: then none amongſt us will be heard to paſs any raſh Cenſures upon the Actions of Superiors, or to Controle any of their Reſolutions. May we all agree in Planting and Improving, not only thoſe moral Virtues, which conduce to the Happineſs and Tranquility of every private Man's Life, but alſo thoſe Manners and Diſpoſitions, that tend to the Safety and Peace of the Kingdom. For the Conſtitution of the Country is generally the ſame with the Perſons, that compoſe it: and where the Inhabitants or Native of any place are peaceable, full of Charity and good Works; their good Behaviour will be made viſible by the continual and undiſturbed Happineſs of the Government, to which they belong, and of the particular Country, in which they were born: and that we are ſuch peaceable Men, and Charitable Chriſtians; I have a very ſufficient Argument to prove it, from the uſe of theſe Meetings: For we aſſemble thus

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together, not to indulge our Appetites, or to gratify any ſenſual Deſire: altho none are ſo excuſable, as Men of much Care and Thought, or of great Buſineſs for allowing ſome time to an innocent Entertainment, that offends no Law, nor hurts others, or themſelves: This Diverſion may be neceſſary for the repair of Spirits exhauſted with Labor; may ſerve to ſweeten and preſerve thoſe Lives, that would otherwiſe wear out too faſt, or grow too uneaſy in the Service of the World: But by theſe Meetings we come to know one another, than which nothing can be more Beneficial: becauſe thereby we may be directed in the beſt ways of exerciſing Charity to our Brethren: which Charity muſt be Univerſal, and not limited to a Shire; but we are to love, honour, and aſſiſt Men of all Countrys: Thus, altho we were born perhaps in the eighth Climate, we ſhall ſeem to be framed for all: By the practice of which univerſal Charity, all Places, all Airs, will make one Country to us; and we are by *This* among our Country-men every where, and under every Meridian: This is a peculiar Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, to enlarge our Minds ſo, as we can call every Man our Brother: and if it be true, which is commonly obſerved, that Men are wont to prove ſuch kinds of Chriſtians, as they were Men before; and that Converſion does not deſtroy,

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but exalt their Tempers; It may well be concluded that the honeſt ſociable Man, who Communicates ſoberly with his Friends, and is ready to do good to Mankind, is neerer to make a Modeſt, Meek, and Humble Chriſtian; than the Man of ſpeculative Science, who is more Peeviſh, Severe, and Moroſe, and hath better Thoughts of himſelf.

For if we are good Men, the more publick we are, and the more ſubject to the Notice of others, our Goodneſs will thereby be the more diffuſive; will be of a more publick Benefit and Advantage: If our Converſation be Bountiful, Affable, Cheerful, and Friendly; it will ſpread the Fame of the Goſpel in the World, by making it appear lovely in the Eyes of all Beholders, and ſo alluring them to ſubmit to the eaſineſs of its Yoak: and this methinks is evident in our Saviour's Life: For whenever he intended to Convert any to his Faith; he did it by ſome viſible good Work in the ſight of the Multitude. So by Converſing lovingly together, we may ſhew the World, what good Succeſs our Saviour's Doctrine hath had upon our Minds; what a bleſſed thing it is, to live without mutual Grudges and Animoſities: We may direct Mankind, how they may live without Paſſions, or Fierceneſs; how they may firmly unite and agree together: For it is not poſſible for thoſe

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Men to be Perverſe and Ungovernable, who keep ſuch Company, as regard the Peace and Benefit of Mankind; who are of amicable and converſable Tempers: Such Perſons are like ſo much Salt caſt into the World, to keep the Manners of Men from Stench and Putrefaction; they are Balm poured into the Wounds of a Nation, to Cure and Heal them; They are ſo much Fire ſent from Heaven, ſo much Life infuſed into the World, to kindle in others warm and pious Affections for God and his Religion.

That we may be of this Diſpoſition, ſo becoming our ſelves, and ſo profitable to others; let us not deſpond or be dejected, whatever our Condition be in this World: For by falling into Fitts of Unbelief, we charge God fooliſhly, as if he neglected the World; we Uſurp upon him, and peeviſhly ſnatch the Management of Things into our own unskilful Hands; ſo *Melanchon* was exceedingly troubled, leſt the Cauſe of God ſhould ſink for want of Inſtruments to carry it on: Whereupon *Luther* in an Epiſtle to a Friend of his, hath this Expreſſion; *Our Friend* Melanchon *muſt be warn'd, that he would leave off to Govern the World*: And how quiet would all things be, if Men would not intrude, nor ſet themſelves at the Stern thereof, but leave infinite Power and Wiſdom to Govern the Affairs of it. Then again we muſt not be apt

to be affrighted at every little Symptom, as we think, of Change in the Government, of things: God's Providence and Mercy (I hope) will ſecure us from any more; for if another ſhould befall us, it muſt be the Wrong-ſide outwards; the Loweſt, Uppermoſt. Yet there are ſome Hiſtorians, that relate our forreign Wars, who have this Objection againſt the Diſpoſition of our Country-Men; that they were uſed to order their Affairs of greateſt Importance, according to ſome obſcure Omens or Predictions, which paſſed about among them upon little or no Foundations: But a firm Confidence in the Goodneſs, Power, and Providence of God, in whom we Live, Move, and have our Being; a ſober Wiſdom, and the Diſcretion of good Society will ſhake off the Shadows, and ſcatter the Miſts, which fill the Minds of Men with vain Conſternations.

Let us be, as *Jonah* was, upright Men, that worſhip and *fear the Lord of Heaven and Earth*; then we ſhall contribute much to the Credit and Preſervation of our Country: For the World would ſink (as *Sodom* did) under the weight of its own Wickedneſs, were it not kept up by ſuch as *fear God and keep his Commandments*: Therefore the eminent Faith of *Abraham*, and the ſincerity of *David*, had an Influence upon the Happineſs of *Iſrael* for many Generations; ſo

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the Example of *Socrates* had upon *Athens*, and the ſevere Life of *Cato* upon the People of *Rome*. For the Places, where good Men are, and the Perſons, among whom they live, are Happy by Concomitancy; they enjoy many Bleſſings, and are freed from many Evils becauſe of their Neighbourhood to good Men; who contribute to the Happineſs of the World by the good Offices, which they are ready to do to all Men: Is any one in Want? They are ready to Relieve him: Do their Enemies Hunger? They will Feed them: Is any Man in Miſery? They do not only pity him, as the Prieſt and Levite did in the Parable, but like good *Samaritans*, they will bind up his Wounds, and take Care of him: are others at Variance? they preſently Interpoſe, take up the Quarrel, and endeavour to Reconcile them: Now is not the World the better for ſuch Men as theſe are? It may be every Man's Caſe to be in Miſery, Affliction, and Want; is it not well then, that there are ſome to Commiſerate them in theſe ſad Circumſtances? The Lips of good Men do alſo preſerve Knowledg, and they are continually diſtilling wiſe Counſel, which by degrees get Poſſeſſion of men's Underſtandings: By their Examples likewiſe they mend and reform others; for it is a greater Encouragement to go before a man, and ſhew him the Way to Virtue, than only to give him Direction.

In short, good Men are the Fathers of their Country; they are the only great and publick Benefactors to it; because to them the World owes its continuance in Peace; their Prayers and Tears defend it both from the Judgments of God, and the hostile Incursions of Men: Wherefore that we may not only bear the Name, but perform the commendable Works of good Men in the World; let us at this time endeavour to recover the Greatness and Reputation of the English Nation, by uniting our Interests, and Affections; by laying aside all civil and religious Differences; by Conversing together freely, in Peace and Love; which our Religion allows and commands us to use: Thus we may rise to the bearing of each others Infirmities; from thence to the exchange of good Offices; from thence to real Friendship: till at last by such a gentle and easie Method, our several Interests may be joyned to promote the Welfare and Peace of our Country. This our friendly Conversation with one another will wear off all the Roughness, and sweeten the humorous Peevishness of our Minds: Nay, it will take away all Sharpness and Violence; will teach us Humility by acquainting us with our own Imperfections, and so it will remove all overweaning haughtiness of Mind, and swelling Imaginations. This is the way to be truly Great and Considerable in

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the World. Indeed (as ſome wiſe Men have obſerved) there are many things in the natural Genius of the Engliſh, which qualify them above any others for an eminent Nation; becauſe our Country is moſt advantagiouſly ſituated for Command; its native Productions are moſt ſerviceable for Strength and Empire: The Diſpoſition of the People is bold in Dangers, ſevere in Diſcipline, valiant in Arms, virtuous in Life, relenting to the Afflicted, and merciful in Conqueſt: It is alſo affirmed by ſome, that the Vices to which we are ſubject, are not natural to our Soyl, but were imported hither from forreign Countrys: The Engliſh Generoſity, Fidelity, Magnanimity, Modeſty, Integrity they owe to themſelves; Their Luxury, their Debauchery, their Diviſions, their ſpiritual Schiſms they have received from abroad: But ſeeing now the Devil hath ſown theſe Tares amongſt us; let us make it our Buſineſs to root them out by the conſtant courſe of a good and holy Life: which will make ſuch Impreſſions upon others, that we ſhall recover and maintain the antient Honour of our Country, and reſtrain our Brethren from degenerateing into baſe and unnatural Sins. Let it be ſaid, that for this end we Converſe together; and indeed for this Purpoſe man was Created a ſociable Creature, that he might aſſiſt his Fellow-Creature, and Pro-

pagate all manner of Goodneſs in the World. For if we ſearch backward to the original Cauſes of men's *aſſociating* and dwelling together; we ſhall find, that in courſe of time the ſmall Clans or natural Commonwealths, were devoured by the ſtrength of the greater: Or elſe ſome of the wiſer Men reduced the rude Multitude into one place, and perſwaded them to live quietly under Laws: From thence Mankind began to have the Face of Civility: which hath been continued ever ſince by the ſame means, by men's living quietly under Laws, and by being ready to help and ſupport one another. So that whilſt I behold ſo many Chriſtians met together to carry on this honeſt Deſign, for whoſe Sake human Society was at firſt conſtituted: It makes me believe, that the Age is not quite ſo bad, as ſome men think it to be; who are apt to complain and find Fault with the Age and Place, where they live, as if it were worſe, than any, that is paſſed: To which cenſorious Humour many, and thoſe wiſe Men too, are very ſubject: For in the antient Authors, which ſtudious Men turn over, they find Deſcriptions of Virtues more perfect, than really they were: The Governments are repreſented better, and the Ways of Life pleaſanter, than they deſerved: upon this, theſe Bookiſh wiſe Men compare what they read with what they

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ſee; and here beholding nothing ſo heroically Tranſcendent, becauſe they are able to mark all the Spots, as well as Beauties of every thing, that is ſo cloſe to their Sight; they preſently begin to deſpiſe their own Times, and to exalt the paſt; to contemn the Virtues, and aggravate the Vices of their Country. But our Work muſt be to commend our Country, and that, not ſo much for our being Natives thereof, or for our long and antient Pedigrees; as that we have one Lord, one Faith, and one Mind: like the Prophet *Jonah*, we muſt conſider, that we are ſailing thro this World with Perſons of diverſe Qualities and Diſpoſitions, that are contriving various Deſigns, and have ranked themſelves into ſeveral Orders: Whilſt we thus uncertainly float upon the Face of the Waters, and are toſſed up and down at the Pleaſure of the Waves, our chief care muſt be to direct our Prayers and Adorations to the *Lord of Heaven and Earth, who made the Sea and the dry Land*, if ever we expect to come ſafe at laſt to the Haven of Reſt and Happineſs; for his ſake, and for our own to keep up Unity in the Bond of Peace; above all things, taking heed, leſt we make Shipwrack of Chriſtian Charity and Love.

That the World therefore may be convinced, how our natural Inclinations lead us to the mind-

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ing of theſe Things; I will conclude all with a ſhort Character of the Diſpoſition of our Country-men: and if there can be a true one given of any Nation, then certainly this may be aſcribed to ours; that the Inhabitants of it have commonly an unaffected Sincerity, whereby they are much inclined to plain-dealing, and juſtly abhor all the refined Ways of Lying by Æquivocations: ſo that they are uſed to ſpeak well of others behind their Backs, as well as to their Faces; they bear no falſe Countenances, that can flatter every thing, and every Body alike; their Tongues, as well as Faces know no Artifice, nor do their Words or Looks contradict their Hearts: They are not Enemies, as ſome are, under the ſpecious name of Friends, and they conſider the intrinſick Worth of Men more, than the Marks and Value good Fortune hath ſet upon them: they love to deliver their Minds with a ſound Simplicity, avoiding the Vanity as well as Sin of falſe Speeches and Complements: For he, that uſes them, believeth not himſelf; ſo that they are imaginary Services, a ſolemn Nonſenſe, and a putting together many good Words to ſignify nothing. They have the middle Qualities between the reſerved ſubtle Southern, and the rough unhewn Northern People: They are not extreamly prone to tattle, thinking it much better to do well, than

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to talk much: an universal Modesty possesses them, and if for any thing they may be reproved, it must be for their excess of natural Bashfulness: These Qualities are so conspicuous and proper to our Soil; that we often hear them objected to us by some of our Neighbour Satyrists, in more disgraceful Expressions: For they are wont to revile the English, with a want of Familiarity, with a Melancholly Dumpishness; with Slowness, Silence, and with the unrefined Sullenness of their Behaviour. But these are only the Reproaches of Partiality and Ignorance; they ought rather to be commended for an honourable Integrity; for neglect of Circumstances and Flourishes; for regarding things of greater moment more, than less; for a Scorn to deceive, as well as to be deceived: which are all the best Endowments, that can enter into the Minds of wise or good Men. So that even the Position of our Climate, the Influence of the Heaven, the Composition of our Blood, as well as the Embraces of the Ocean, seem to render our Country, a Land of peculiar Blessings, of great Knowledg, and of true Friendship: And it is a good sign, that God will reveal more of his Secrets; will bestow larger Gifts both of Human and Divine Knowledg upon us, than up-

on others; because he hath already furnished us with a natural Genius, so well proportioned and fitted for the receiving and practising his Gospel of Peace and Love.

FINIS.

Books Printed for, and Sould by Samuel Carr *at the* King's Head *in St.* Paul's *Church-Yard.*

A Sermon Preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the *Eton* Scholars *Novemb.* 18. 1679. by *Tho. Horn*, Fellow of *King's Colledg* in *Cambridg.*

A Sermon Preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the *Eton* Scholars *Novemb.* 6. 1681. by *William Perse*, late Fellow of *King's Colledg* in *Cambridg.*

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